



NSPS Newsletter

AF National Security Personnel System Office
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Current Status

National Security Personnel System (NSPS) Final Regulations Published

The Department of the Air Force is pleased to join with the Department of Defense (DoD) in announcing the publication of the NSPS regulations in the Federal Register and the imminent implementation of the program across Air Force.

Once the regulations are published on 28 October, DoD will begin a mandated 30-day congressional notification period. Immediately following this 30-day period, the new NSPS labor-management rules will be implemented for all employees currently covered by the labor relation's provision of *title 5, Chapter 71*. In addition to most General Schedule (GS), General Manager (GM) and Acq Demo employees, the labor-management rules cover NAF employees, wage system employees, overseas organizations, organizations under laboratory demonstration projects, and so on.

Continuing collaboration with union representatives over *implementing issuances* will also begin at the end of the 30-day congressional notification period. These implementing issuances provide the detailed guidelines necessary to move from the general framework established in the NSPS regulations to the practical application of the program at installation level.

AF Senior Management

'NSPS represents a historic milestone in Federal civilian personnel management. Created with input from hundreds of Department of Defense employees, managers, supervisors, labor representatives and other key stakeholders, NSPS introduces performance-based pay with emphasis on rewarding excellence. It simplifies and streamlines hiring and staffing applications. It replaces narrow grade levels with broad pay bands that allow managers to assign work as needed and employees to explore enhanced career opportunities. In purpose and design, NSPS represents a unique opportunity to attract, retain, reward and grow a civilian workforce to meet the mission of the Air Force.'

With these words, Acting Secretary of the Air Force Pete Geren and Air Force Chief of Staff General T. Michael Moseley affirm the commitment of Air Force Senior managers, both civilian and military, to the implementation of NSPS.

The complete text of the memorandum will be made available to all civilian employees and will be added to the [Air Force NSPS website](#) shortly.

NSPS Timeline

NSPS Projected Schedule

On 28 October, the NSPS Regulations will be published in the Federal Register.

Following the publication, DoD begins a mandated 30-day congressional notification period. Once completed, the NSPS Labor Relations System will be implemented and DoD will enter a 30-day continuing collaboration period with union representatives over the NSPS implementing issuances.

Beginning in early 2006, the NSPS Human Resources system will be phased in. Changes to classification, pay administration, performance management, staffing, workforce shaping, adverse actions and appeals will be included. First to implement will be installations in Spiral 1.1: over 17,000 GS employees at Eglin, Ellsworth, Lackland, McConnell, Moody, Patrick and Tinker Air Force Bases, March Air Reserve Base, and some elements from Air Force Pentagon will convert.

Spiral 1.2 will be implemented in spring 2006 at 32 Air Force installations and will add approximately 32,000 GS/GM/Acq Demo employees.

Spiral 1.3 will be implemented in fall 2006 at 43 Air Force installations and will cover approximately 35,700 GS/GM/Acq Demo employees.

Over the next two or three years, DoD will incrementally phase-in the next two spirals: Spiral 2 includes the rest of the eligible DoD civilian workforce, including wage system and overseas employees. Spiral 3 will include DoD laboratories, if legislative restrictions are lifted.

Check out the [Air Force NSPS website](#) to learn more about when your installation is scheduled to deploy.

NSPS Need- To-Know Information

A number of changes have been made to the NSPS proposed regulation in response to the 58,000 comments received during the public comment period and input from the unions during the statutory meet-and-confer period. Items below highlight a few of the most important features of the final regulations. More information on these topics can be found on the [DoD NSPS website](#)

Labor

The final regulations preserve the right to bargain collectively but find an appropriate balance between employee interests and mission needs. The NSPS regulations do not affect the right of employees to participate in labor organizations nor does it eliminate unions or bargaining units. The requirement to bargain over the impact of management actions for adversely affected employees is retained.

Performance Management

Supervisors will be required to work with employees in developing performance plans and to explain the link between employee performance objectives and the overall mission of the organization. Performance expectations will be provided to the employee in writing.

Supervisors will be trained on the new system and will be held accountable for giving each employee a fair appraisal; how well they conduct their performance management responsibilities will be part of supervisors' performance plans and their effectiveness will be an important consideration in determining their pay increases.

If an employee feels a performance rating is inappropriate, he/she may request reconsideration. A non-bargaining unit employee may challenge a rating of record through an administrative reconsideration process; bargaining unit employees may choose either the administrative reconsideration process or a negotiated grievance procedure.

Pay

NSPS is a performance-based system. To receive any pay increase employees must be performing at an acceptable level. Key ideas to remember include:

- ◆ Employees convert to NSPS at their current salary. In many cases, employees will actually receive an increase equal to the amount they have earned towards their next within-grade-increase (WGI). This adjustment is known as the 'WGI buy-in.'
- ◆ Annual performance payouts are directly related to an employee's performance and contribution to the mission.
- ◆ Pay adjustments will result from changes in nation-wide salary ranges (*rate ranges*) due to market conditions but unlike the current system, where such increases are applied across a pay schedule, in NSPS these can vary by occupation and pay band. Employees who are rated as unacceptable will not be eligible for rate range adjustments.
- ◆ NSPS also includes a locality-based component of pay called a 'local market supplement' (LMS). The LMS will be based on market conditions related to geographical and occupation factors and may differ from one occupation to another in a give location. Employees who are rated as unacceptable will not be eligible for local market supplements.
- ◆ Under NSPS, the overall amount of money that would have been used for the annual January pay adjustment, within-grade increases, quality step increases and similar payments will be used for civilian pay.

All eligible employees will receive the 2006 general pay increase (GPI). The first NSPS payout for Spiral 1.1 and 1.2 employees will be in January 2007.

Pay Bands

Under NSPS, classification will be simplified and streamlined and will include broad groupings of occupations based on the nature of the work, career patterns, and market factors. Within each career group, work will be separated into pay schedules covering basic categories of work such as technician, professional, and supervisory work. These NSPS pay schedules will replace the GS and, eventually, the wage system pay schedule.

Within each of these pay schedules, there will be broad pay bands that reflect pay ranges for different levels of work. More information about NSPS pay schedules and pay bands and where you will fit under NSPS will be available as we move toward implementation.

**Benefits
and
Employee
Rights**

NSPS will not affect rules governing retirement benefits or eligibility, health and life insurance, leave, attendance, and other similar benefits.

In addition, NSPS retains critical rights such as merit systems principles, due process, whistleblower protections, and protection against prohibited discrimination and prohibited personnel practices.

Training

NSPS training will be available both on the web and in classrooms, in written informational materials and workshops.

Web-based training will consist of two 60-minute courses, 'Fundamentals of NSPS' and 'NSPS 101.' Information on accessing these courses will be provided at a later date.

Classroom sessions will be scheduled at deploying installations approximately four to six weeks before NSPS implementation. Employees will receive additional information on class schedules from their personnel offices.

Informational material, including brochures, pamphlets and newsletters, will be provided as they become available.

In addition, all employees are invited to visit the [DoD NSPS website](#) for the latest information and the [AF NSPS website](#) for component-specific information.

This newsletter is produced by the AF DP/DPXN staff and is provided as a public service by the Headquarters United States Air Force.

You can sign up for future editions of the U.S. Air Force NSPS News by sending a blank email to join-afdpnn@mercury.afnews.af.mil and put "join-afdpnn" in the subject line. A link is also on the Air Force NSPS website.